

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

EVENTS TO MARK THE BICENTENARY
OF THE 1807 ACT OF PARLIAMENT

FEBRUARY – NOVEMBER 2007



City of Westminster



Picture from a lithograph of Ira Aldridge by Nicolas Barabas, 1853.
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Foreword

In 1807 Parliament passed an Act to make illegal Britain's participation in the transatlantic trade in African people. However, slavery itself was not abolished in the British colonies until 30 years later. The practice was not outlawed in America until 1865 and in Brazil until 1888 and even today still exists in different forms around the world.

Two hundred years on, Westminster City Council is supporting a programme of events throughout the year to remember the millions who suffered and the people who campaigned for abolition.

We are pleased to present these free events which include films, walks and exhibitions. They are all designed to provide opportunities to learn more about the diverse heritage and culture of Westminster's communities and promote mutual understanding and awareness of this heritage amongst today's residents.



Sir Simon Milton
Leader of Westminster City Council



An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807

Westminster and the transatlantic slave trade

Tues 6th March - Fri 3rd August
City of Westminster Archives Centre

The City of Westminster Archives Centre is mounting an exhibition entitled *Westminster and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Focusing on the impact of the slave trade at a local level, the exhibition draws on the Centre's extensive archives and local studies collections. The exhibition also documents the lives of the African residents of Westminster during the age of the slave trade.

Admission free

Address: City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London, SW1P 2DE

Telephone: 020 7641 5180

Email: archives@westminster.gov.uk

Web: www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/archives

Nearest tube station: St James's Park, Victoria

Nearest railway station: Victoria

Buses: 11, 24, 211 along Victoria Street; 88 along Great Smith Street; 507 along Horseferry Road

www.westminster.gov.uk/abolition

Ira Aldridge project

by CETTIE (Cultural Exchange Through Theatre in Education)

Tues 6th March, 6pm

City of Westminster Archives Centre

Shango Baku of CETTIE will present excerpts from *Splendid Mummer*, a monodrama based on the life of Ira Aldridge, the Black 19th century Shakespearean actor and abolitionist at Westminster Archives.

Ira Aldridge was the first black actor to play Othello – at Covent Garden in 1833 but, although acclaimed in the provinces and in Europe, in London he was the victim of a racist campaign in the press.

The presentation will be featured at the opening ceremony of Westminster's exhibition commemorating the Parliamentary Act to abolish the Slave Trade in 1807.

Admission free

See address details on previous page.

Women and abolition

Fri 23rd March, 7pm

Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre

CETTIE in collaboration with Yaa Asantewaa presents *Women and Abolition: an exploration of the role of women in the abolition movement*. The event will include a panel debate, presentations by women activists, poetry and drama.

Admission free

Address: Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre, 1 Chippenham Mews, London, W9 2AN

Telephone: 020 7286 1656

Email: yaa@yaaasantewaa.com

Web: www.yaaasant.demon.co.uk

Nearest tube stations: Westbourne Park, Royal Oak



Exhibition of images from the Royal Geographical Society with IBG plus **illustrated talks**

Westminster Libraries

A powerful collection of photographs taken by colonial officer Sir Harry Johnston between 1908-09 provides a rare glimpse of everyday life in Barbados, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad at the turn of the century. The collection was donated to the Royal Geographical Society's archive by the Johnston family in 1933. Johnston was originally asked to visit the Caribbean by US President Theodore Roosevelt and his expressive images reveal an unfamiliar narrative from these island communities. Some scenes depict Maroon settlements – towns where runaway slaves lived freely outside British rule in the Jamaican mountains, while others show aspects of daily life covering farming, religion and markets.

Some of these images are on display in the Westminster Reference Library and others can be seen in Paddington Library. After this the full collection will be on display in Maida Vale Library. Each exhibition will feature an accompanying talk. See next pages for dates of exhibitions and talks.

Royal
Geographical
Society
with IBG



Maroon Boys collecting wood, Jamaica, Harry Johnston, 1908-09
Image copyright of the RGS-IBG

Westminster Reference Library

Exhibition Mon 19th March – Fri 13th April

Talk by Steve Martin Thurs 22th March, 6.30 - 8pm

Illustrated talk

Using the photographs taken by Sir Harry Johnston between 1908-1909 this illustrated presentation will examine the impact of Maroon history and culture on Jamaica society from its origins in the 17th century to the present day.

Steve Martin

Specialising in the fields of Black British history and literature, S I Martin is a writer and researcher who has undertaken Black history projects for numerous organisations including English Heritage, the National Maritime Museum, the Museum of London, several London boroughs and the BBC. He is the author of the novel *Incomparable World* and the non-fiction title *Britain's Slave Trade*. He is the founder of the 500 Years of Black London walking and boat tours.

Address: Westminster Reference Library, 35 St Martin's Street, London, WC2H 7HP

Telephone: 020 7641 1300

Email: referencelibrarywc2@westminster.gov.uk

Web: www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/findalibrary

Nearest tube stations: Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus, Charing Cross

Buses: 11, 24, 29, 176 or any that go to Trafalgar Square or Charing Cross Rd

Paddington Library

Exhibition Mon 19th March – Fri 13th April

Talk by Cliff Pereira Thurs 29th March, 6.30 - 8pm

Road to freedom on three continents

An illustrated talk on free communities established by formerly enslaved Africans on three continents. Cliff Pereira looks at the establishment of 'runaway slave' settlements in South America, Africa and Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, tracing the origins of these communities and their legacies.

Cliff Pereira

Cliff Pereira is a freelance history researcher, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a committee Member of the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), a BASA consultant to the Royal Chatham Dockyard and a member of the Anglo-Portuguese Society.

Cliff has published a biography of Thomas Stephens, the first recorded Englishman in India, and conducted archival research on the Bombay Africans, presenting his work at international conferences.

He is presently a consultant and researcher to the Royal Geographical Society on the Crossing Continents project

Address: Paddington Library, Porchester Road, London, W2 5DU

Telephone: 020 7641 1300

Email: paddingtonlibrary@westminster.gov.uk

Web: www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/findalibrary

Nearest tube stations: Royal Oak, Bayswater

Buses: 7, 23, 27, 36, 18

Maida Vale Library

Exhibition Mon 16th April – Tues 8th May

Talk by Cliff Pereira Mon 16th April, 6.30 - 7.45pm

Afro-Asians

In 2007 the popular focus is on the Atlantic Slave Trade. This illustrated talk by Cliff Pereira looks at the older Indian Ocean Slave trade that continued into the early years of the twentieth century. Cliff Pereira provides an overview of the routes and markets of this trade and looks at the surviving communities of Africans in Asia.

To find out more about the archives of the Royal Geographical Society with IBG please visit www.rgs.org

Address: Maida Vale Library, Sutherland Avenue, London, W9 2QT

Telephone: 020 7641 1300

Email: maidavalelibrary@westminster.gov.uk

Web: www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/findalibrary

Nearest tube stations: Warwick Avenue, Maida Vale

Buses: 6, 187, 414

Film screenings

Fri 23rd February, 12.30pm

National Portrait Gallery, Ondaatje Wing Theatre

Double Bill

A Son of Africa

Dir Alrick Riley, 28 mins, 1996

Olaudah Equiano was kidnapped into slavery from a West African village when he was 11 years old. He was taken to a Virginia plantation, fought for Britain in various wars, bought his own freedom, lived in Westminster in the 1780s and wrote his autobiography which became a sensational best seller.

The First Black Britons

Dir Cath Sheehan, 60 mins, 2005

This fascinating film explores the hidden history of the enslaved Africans who fought for the British Army. From the 1790s onwards these men were forced to learn the English language, culture and customs and then sent back to Africa to fight other Africans. Some of them ended up living in Britain after their discharge where an act of Parliament established them as a new class of citizen - 'Black British'.

The films will be introduced by Tony Warner from 100 Black Men of London and there will be time for a discussion after the screening.

Admission free – but please book a place by calling 020 7641 2498 or emailing arts@westminster.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the event.

DVDs will be available for sale on the day.

Address: St Martin's Place, London, WC2H 0HE

Web: www.npg.org.uk

www.blackhistorywalks.co.uk/3.html

Email: Enquiries about any of the films can be sent to info@blackhistorywalks.co.uk

Nearest tube stations: Charing Cross, Leicester Square

Film screenings continued

Sun 25th March, 2pm
National Portrait Gallery, Ondaatje Wing Theatre

Slave Catchers Slave Resisters

Dir Judy Richardson, 100 minutes, 2005

A unique documentary, which details the many ways in which slaves resisted and fought back against the plantation owners. Slavery was built on a brutal system of slave policing - enforced by armed community patrols, paid slave catchers, and federal law. While slave catchers were usually successful, the bounty hunters' bloodhounds were occasionally defeated by the intelligence and courage of the enslaved. In the North, slave catchers had to contend with an organised and armed free black community.

Using re-creations, archival material, and scholarly interviews, Slave Catchers Slave Resisters brings a story to life that has never before been portrayed on film. Through the lens of time, these tales demonstrate that within the darkness, there was also light.

Children should be accompanied by an adult.

The film will be introduced by Tony Warner from 100 Black Men of London and there will be time for a discussion after the screening.

Admission free – but please book a place by calling 020 7641 2498 or emailing arts@westminster.gov.uk at least 48 hours before the event.

Address: St Martin's Place, London, WC2H OHE

Web: www.npg.org.uk

www.blackhistorywalks.co.uk/3.html

Email: Enquiries about any of the films can be sent to info@blackhistorywalks.co.uk

Nearest tube stations: Charing Cross, Leicester Square

Thurs 31st May, 10am
Odeon Leicester Square

Double Bill

Catch a Fire

Dir Menelik Shabaz, 30 mins, 1995

This film charts the reasons for, and results of, the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865. Thirty one years after slavery was 'abolished' Africans were still forced to live in slave-like conditions and discrimination continued. Under the leadership of Paul Bogle, often described as a 19th century Malcolm X, Africans in Jamaica rebelled.

The Lion Mountains

Dir Louis Buckley, 54 mins, 2005

subtitles

Film director Louis Buckley will be present at the screening to take questions.

25 year old Louis Buckley was born in London and lives in Paddington. In his documentary he traces his roots back to Sierra Leone, a country rich in natural resources yet one of the poorest in the world. Buckley looks at black revolutionaries, the abolition of the slave trade, the extent of the Diaspora, and the after-effects of colonialism.

The films will be introduced by Tony Warner from 100 Black Men of London and there will be time for a discussion after the screening.

Admission free – but please book a place by calling 020 7641 2498 or emailing arts@westminster.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the event.

DVDs will be available for sale on the day.

Address: 24-26 Leicester Square, London, WC2H 7JY

Email: info@blackhistorywalks.co.uk

Web: www.blackhistorywalks.co.uk/3.html

Nearest tube station: Leicester Square

Nearest railway station: Charing Cross

Guided heritage walks with Steve Martin

Sun 1st April, 11am

Sun 22nd April, 11am

Wed 16th May, 11am

Sat 16th June, 11am

As a hub of local and national government, events and individuals in the city of Westminster have played a determining role in the history of people of African origin in the British Empire during and after the period of the transatlantic slave trade.

This walk will highlight the careers of Black activists and writers and white parliamentarians who fought for an end to the trade in human lives, as well as taking a look at the lives of ordinary Black Londoners who were affected by it. Throughout the tour we will hear the voices of former slaves like Ottobah Cugoana, Ignatius Sancho and Olaudah Equiano, who resided in Westminster expressing in their own words the horrors of slavery. We will also hear the story of the abolitionist struggle in the Palace of Westminster through the words of William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton.

It is a story that will take us from 1511 (and one of the earliest records of the African presence in London) to the Pan African Conference of 1900.

The walk will take approximately 1 hour 15 minutes and is suitable for all ages and abilities.

Start: walks will start from the foyer of Westminster City Hall
End: walks will end at Trafalgar Square

Address: Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

Admission free – but it is essential to book a place by calling 020 7641 2498 or emailing arts@westminster.gov.uk at least 48 hours before the event.

Nearest tube stations: Victoria, St James's

Nearest railway station: Victoria

Buses: 11, 24, 211

On the road to abolition – an online heritage trail

We invite you to follow a heritage trail which takes in some key sites in Westminster related to the slave trade. You can download a map and an optional audio guide from the internet at www.westminster.gov.uk/abolition. The map illustrates a walk from Trafalgar Square to Pimlico and highlights events and individuals involved in the campaign to abolish slavery.

Devised by the historian Steve Martin, it has been jointly produced by the partners below.

The walk is intended as a starting point for anyone interested in exploring one of the most catastrophic events in modern British and world history. For a printed copy of the map please email arts@westminster, ring 020 7641 2498 or visit one of the participating galleries.



The British slave trade: abolition, parliament and people

Wed 23rd May to Sun 23rd September
Houses of Parliament

This exhibition tells the story of the pressures and events, at home and abroad, which influenced Parliament's abolition of the British slave trade in 1807. The Act abolishing the trade is displayed along with other important exhibits which bring this remarkable story to life.

Admission free

Address: Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament, Parliament Square, London, SW1

Web: www.parliament.uk/slavetrade

Nearest tube station: Westminster

Buses: 3, 11, 12, 24, 53, 77A, 211, 453



Scratch the surface

Fri 20th July – Sun 4th November

The National Gallery, Room 1

Marking the bicentenary, *Scratch the Surface* brings together the paintings Zoffany's *Mrs Oswald* (1763–4) and Reynolds's *Colonel Tarleton* (1782) to explore the complex relationship between sitters and slavery. New work by Yinka Shonibare MBE will also be on display in the spectacular Barry Rooms.

Admission free

Address: Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 5DN

Telephone: 020 7747 2885

Web: www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Nearest tube stations: Leicester Square, Charing Cross

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

Portraits, people and the abolition of the slave trade

Sat 17th March – Sun 22nd July

National Portrait Gallery

A specially commissioned trail that runs through the gallery highlighting portraits of key individuals, ranging from Elizabeth I to William Wilberforce, who have been linked to the slave trade and its abolition. These portraits include individuals who invested in the trade, or who owned slaves and supported slavery, as well as images of slaves themselves and of people who were prominent in the movement to abolish the trade.

Admission free

Address: St Martin's Place, London, WC2H 0HE

Web: www.npg.org.uk

Nearest tube stations: Leicester Square, Charing Cross

National
Portrait
Gallery

1807: Blake, slavery and the radical mind

Mon 30th April – Sat 21st October 2007

Tate Britain

This special display marks the anniversary of the Parliamentary act abolishing the slave trade in the British empire in 1807. It focuses on William Blake (1757-1827) and the circle of radical writers and artists associated with the publisher Joseph Johnson (1738-1809) in the 1790s and 1800s.

Admission free

Address: Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG

Telephone: 020 7887 8888

Web: www.tate.org.uk

Nearest tube station: Pimlico

Buses: 2, 3, 36, 87, 88, 185, 360, 436, 507 and C10

TATE



William Blake (1757-1827) Frontispiece to 'Visions of the Daughters of Albion' circa 1795. ©Tate

Further reading

Books

Celebrating the Black Presence in Westminster 1500-2000: Hidden Lives

(Schools resource pack Key Stage 1 to A-level), available from City of Westminster Archives Centre – Barber, Jill, 2000

The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings – Olaudah Equiano, 2003

Staying Power – Fryer, Peter, 1984

William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner

– Hague, William, June 2007

Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery – Hochschild, Adam, 2005

The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution – James, C L R, 2001

The Great Abolition Sham: The True Story of the End of the British Slave Trade

– Jordan, Michael, 2005

Sources for Black & Asian History at the City of Westminster Archives Centre

– Lalwan, Rory (ed), 2005

The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave – Prince, Mary and Salih, Sara, 2000

Rough Crossings – Schama, Simon, 2006

Transatlantic Slavery – Against Human Dignity – Tibbles, Anthony (ed), 2006

Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865

– Wood, Marcus, 2000

Websites

www.antislavery.org/2007 – Anti-Slavery International's website with both contemporary and historical information about slavery.

www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower

www.blackhistory4schools.com/slavetrade – An excellent, local resource for schools.

www.black-history-month.co.uk

www.brychancarey.com/slavery/index.htm – A collection of resources.

www.culture.gov.uk/about_us/culture

www.discoveringbristol.org.uk – The slave trade and abolition movement in Bristol.

www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/index.htm – Resources about the history of slavery.

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/slavery/liverpool.asp – Provides more background on the 1788 petition.

www.mersey-gateway.org/server.php?show=nav.001 – Further background on the movements for and against the slave trade.

www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/midcolpetition.htm – An American petition against the slave trade, of 1790.

www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom/viewTheme.cfm/theme/timeline – Key Stage 3 resources from the National Maritime Museum.

www.setallfree.net – Churches Together's slavery website, which provides contemporary and historical information on slavery.

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/slavery.htm – Information about the campaign against the slave trade and slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/history/hislavery.html – Portal for slavery websites with international coverage and lots of British sites and resources.

www.understandingslavery.com/aboutus – Resources and information about teaching the history of slavery.

www.wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk/slave.htm – Some details on the businessman Josiah Wedgwood's involvement in the campaign against the slave trade and his famous anti-slavery medal.

www.wilberforce2007.com/index.php – Website relating to William Wilberforce and Hull and their involvement in the campaign against the slave trade.

www.wwnorton.com/nto/18century/topic_2/petition.htm – A petition from Liverpool in 1788, site contains other information as well.

For more information on events in Westminster please visit www.westminster.gov.uk, email arts@westminster.gov.uk or ring 020 7641 2498.